



Committed to the future of rural communities.

NEWS RELEASE

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTS \$299,448 MOCK CHECK TO OZARK FOOTHILLS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

On Monday, March 9, 2009, Greg Batson, Dexter Area Director for USDA Rural Development, presented a mock check in the amount of \$299,448 to Ozark Foothills Development Association (OFDA). The mock check represents the funding awarded to OFDA for a Self-Help Housing Grant to aid in the construction of 18 homes in Butler County.

“These funds will help jumpstart the building of housing units to help struggling families while creating jobs and putting people back to work,” said U.S. Senator Kit Bond. “I commend the USDA and Ozark Foothills Development Association leadership for making this important project a reality.”

“During these difficult economic times when so many people are losing their homes, I am pleased to see that homes will be built in Butler County,” U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill said. “These federal grant dollars will help provide hard-working Missouri families with homes that they build themselves for their children to grow up in.”

Rural Development began its partnership with OFDA for Self-Help Housing in 2004. Since the inception of the program, 23 families have constructed new homes in the Poplar Bluff area. This is the fourth grant awarded to OFDA for Self-Help Housing. This cycle of funding will provide technical assistance to an additional 18 families that qualify for the program.

“Rural housing is one of the most important issues in our region. We need to preserve the dream of homeownership and ensure that the responsibility of owning a home remains a key message in our communities. This grant will help construct 18 homes in Butler County, and it will provide quality shelter for as many families. I’m very proud USDA Rural Development has identified this opportunity to invest in the people of Southern Missouri, and I congratulate the Ozark Foothills Development Association for obtaining it,” said U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.



Those attending the media event included: Christy Ferrell, representing Senator Claire McCaskill; representatives from the following: USDA Rural Development, Ozark Foothills Development Association, Little Dixie Community Action Agency, and Smith & Company; individuals/families participating in the Self-Help Housing program: Keith & Heather Willis, Cynthia Gorman, Michael & Shannon Ray, and Robert Monroe.

The Self-Help Housing Program provides low and very-low income people in rural areas the opportunity to build their own homes. OFDA offers technical guidance for the groups of eligible families and individuals that perform approximately 65 percent of the total construction, with professional work such as site preparation and concrete being sub-contracted out. With a large portion of the work being performed by the families or individuals, they wind up having approximately \$15,000 of 'sweat equity' invested in their homes. The homes are then mortgaged through USDA Rural Development at a low interest rate for 33 years.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has utilized a variety of programs and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information regarding any of the USDA Rural Development programs is available by contacting the Poplar Bluff Rural Development Office at kimberlin.allison@mo.usda.gov or by calling 573-785-9679, ext. 4. Rural Development's web site is: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo.

"Committed to the future of rural communities."

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).